

# Dugway High School 5020 5<sup>th</sup> Street Dugway, Utah 84022

May 3, 2007





Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

# THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

## Dugway High School 5020 5<sup>th</sup> Street Dugway, Utah 84022

May 3, 2007

## UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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#### **FOREWORD**

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, May 3, 2007, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Dugway High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Karen Swenson is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Dugway High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Dugway High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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## **DUGWAY HIGH SCHOOL**

## **ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF**

## **School Administration**

Karen Swenson		Principal		
Counseling  Joseph Morgan III				
Support Staff				
2				
<u>Faculty</u>				
Sara Ferriola Shawn Ferriola Rachel Jensen Michael Klock	Brianne Lee David McCleskey Susan Moffett LeeRoy Nielson	Shanna Omer J. Blaine Schofield Michael Spendlove		

### **DUGWAY HIGH SCHOOL**

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Dugway High School, in partnership with students, teachers, staff, parents and community (TEAM), is to enable all students to acquire and use knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

#### **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

We believe knowledge empowers students to discover their ability to learn.

We believe through active engagement students will apply learning in meaningful context.

We believe education is a commitment of continuous improvement which enables students to become confident, self-directed and life long learners.

We believe teachers, administrators, parents and the community share the responsibility for advancing the school's mission.

## MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Steven K. Hirase, Visiting Team Chairperson, District Administration, Murray School District

#### VISITING TEAM REPORT

#### **DUGWAY HIGH SCHOOL**

**CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE** 

Dugway High School is one of five public high schools in the Tooele County School District, which serves students and encompasses the entire area of Tooele County in the western desert of Utah. Dugway High School is located at the Dugway Proving Ground, approximately 85 miles southwest of Salt Lake City, Utah. Although the school is on a military base, it is not a Department of Defense school. The school's mascot is the Mustang.

Dugway High School was built in 1951. It currently serves a student population of 125, who mirror the racial and cultural diversity of the community the school serves. The student population is 83 percent Caucasian, three percent Asian, one percent African American, five percent Pacific Islander, four percent Native American, and five percent Hispanic.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

The school has compiled and analyzed formal and informal assessment data for the purpose of informing classroom instruction.

Due to limited "n" sizes, disaggregated data is often unavailable. However, due to those same small numbers, it is possible for the school to focus on student-level data. The school analyzes each student's proficiency level and provides interventions specific to the deficit areas.

The school has analyzed its CRT data and has identified areas of strength and areas that require improvement. The data was analyzed down to the objective level.

A high majority (80 percent) of students participate in extracurricular activities. The school has a rich history of excellence in athletics as well as in the performing arts. The school has won many state championships, and the band has been state champion for the last 16 of 17 years.

The school also has an outstanding academic history. Seventy-five percent of the school's juniors and seniors take the ACT test each year. The school has enjoyed a 100 percent graduation rate for the past five school years.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

The school should reconvene the focus groups to analyze school effectiveness, utilizing the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) indicators of quality to provide information related to Dugway High School's organizational effectiveness. The school should also have each department analyze its effectiveness by addressing the essential questions for departmental analysis.

## **Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:**

Dugway High School has been engaged in a very collaborative effort, involving each of the major stakeholders, in preparing the school's profile and school improvement plan. However, a couple of critical components were overlooked in the school profile. The Visiting Team recommends the following as areas for further inquiry:

- Have each of the departments complete the "Essential Questions for Departmental Analysis."
- Reconvene the focus groups and utilize the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) Indicators of Quality to provide information related to Dugway High School's organizational effectiveness.

#### **CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS**

- a) To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?
  - Interviews with staff members, students, and parents clearly indicated a high level of participation from each major stakeholder group at the school. A high participation rate from parents, students, and teachers on the survey tool is indicative of the high level of support for the school from the community. Students, parents, and staff members were involved with each component of the accreditation process.
- b) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?
  - The school's self-study is an accurate representation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school could have been provided with additional information related to its relative strengths and weakness through a more detailed departmental analysis and focus group process.

## CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Dugway High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

## **Thinking and Reasoning**

Students will use inquiry not only to ask questions but to enable them to make logical choices obtain a variety of experiences and allow them to become independent thinkers.

### **Social and Civic Responsibility**

Students will recognize the diversity of their peers and community and understand their responsibility to them. They will use the democratic process in their decisions and activities to benefit society.

## **Character**

Students will be empowered to discover their ability to continuously learn through self-reflection while recognizing their own self worth and the worth of others.

#### **Aesthetics**

Students will engage in multiple curricular activities that will increase their ability to understand why aesthetics matter in knowledge, skills, and behaviors.

#### Communication

Students will develop communication skills utilizing the reciprocal processes of conveying information and expressing thought verbally through various modes of modern technology as well as considering and comprehending opposing views of others which is essential to effective interpersonal relationships whether in the family, school, workplace or community.

## **Systems Thinking**

Students will understand the systems of their environment, their roles and responsibilities within such systems, and how they can improve the systems functionality.

## **Employability**

Students will establish work-related skill and personal traits which will maximize career opportunities.

### Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?
  - The school administration established a consensus-building process for defining the school's mission and vision. The school's mission is clearly articulated and is supported by the belief statements.
- b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?
  - The school has identified a set of beliefs that focuses on the roles that the school, parents, and students must assume in providing educational opportunities for all students to excel, currently and in the future. The school's beliefs clearly align with the mission statement.
- c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

Dugway High School's learning community is invested in the desired results for student learning (DRSLs). It was evident to the Visiting Team that the DRSLs are closely aligned with the mission and beliefs of the school. They serve as an extension of these components, and provide clear direction of the school's priorities for students.

#### **Curriculum Development:**

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?

The school, due to its small size, does not organize into departments. Typically, each teacher is the only individual teaching that specific content area. The staff reports a high level of collaboration and cooperation, but it is not specifically related to the standards in the State Core Curriculum. New teachers specifically talked about the support provided by their colleagues.

b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?

The Visiting Team did not find any evidence of the development of curricula related to the school's DRSLs, either individually or collaboratively. This can be explained by the fact that the school completed the self-study and action plan just prior to the visit from the accreditation team.

## **Quality Instructional Design:**

a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?

The professional staff provides students with a variety of learning opportunities during classroom instructional time. The scope and pacing of lessons are appropriate to the students. The design and selection of instructional strategies and activities are generally based on the essential knowledge and skills for student learning within the content areas observed.

b) To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?

Due to the small class sizes, the professional staff has the opportunity to tailor their instructional strategies to meet the needs of their individual students. The majority of the teachers are very accommodating in individualizing instruction for children who are struggling. In addition, students have the opportunity to work in cooperative/collaborative groups that also benefited struggling learners.

c) To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?

The professional staff provides many additional classroom and extracurricular opportunities that support student learning. Due to the configuration of the community (where the majority of students are housed on the military base), as well as the teaching staff, students commented that teachers are always willing to assist them, and that many of them go to their teachers' houses after hours if they are struggling with an assignment.

### **Quality Assessment Systems:**

a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?

The Visiting Team found evidence related to staff-developed classroom assessments but no evidence of school-wide assessments. In situations where student assessment (formal or informal) was observed, expectations for student earning were typically defined clearly, in terms of explicit performance indicators related to classroom curriculum standards.

b) To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?

There is evidence that indicates the school staff understands the importance of using multiple assessments in evaluating student performance. The school administrator has directed the staff to use a wide variety of formal and informal assessments of student learning, based on the state standards, to guide their classroom instruction. The school's purpose for assessing student learning appears to include monitoring student progress and improving student learning, not simply measuring the presence or absence of students' achievement of essential knowledge and skills.

c) To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?

A review of Dugway High School's assessment data, at both the school and classroom levels, provides evidence that the criteria and performance standards used to determine the level of student performance are consistently applied on an equitable basis. The assessments are designed to allow all students to demonstrate their knowledge in the areas assessed, and appear to be free of items that favor students of one background or gender over another.

### **Leadership for School Improvement:**

a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?

The administrator at Dugway High School has focused professional development efforts, during her tenure, on best practices related to student achievement. The administration has made a concerted effort to recognize and celebrate student and staff accomplishments, which has made them feel valued and important.

b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?

The school administration is very aware of the importance of the analysis of data in making sound decisions related to student achievement. The administration has encouraged the staff to use a wide variety of assessments to get an accurate picture of student achievement. The school staff has also been encouraged to

analyze data on both the classroom and the individual student levels when looking at changes in classroom instruction and individual student interventions.

c) To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?

The school administrator actively and regularly monitors student progress and achievement on an individual student basis. She is keenly aware of which students are at mastery level, but more important, which students are not achieving mastery. The administration promotes the importance of the accurate monitoring of student progress.

d) To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?

The students, parents, and staff praise the school administration for the creation of a safe and positive learning environment, and for giving the school focus and a sense of direction to address student learning.

e) To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?

The school's resources, both human and financial, appear to be allocated in alignment with the mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. School plans (the school improvement plan, school Land Trust plan, etc.) are aligned, including fiscal resources, and are focused on the improvement of student learning.

f) To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?

Due to the size of the school and the fact that it is located on a restricted military base, the school is an integral part of the community in general. The school administration provides many opportunities for community involvement in the school. In meetings with parent groups, the Visiting Team notes a high level of commitment from patrons to the school. One parent member of a focus group reported that her youngest son graduated from the school the previous year, but she was so committed to what was happening at the school that she continued to participate in activities and serve on the School Community Council as an exofficio member.

## **Community Building:**

a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

As previously mentioned, the school and the community share a strong relationship. Students, teachers and administrators have good working relationships that are positive, productive, and professional. The school offers students a wide variety of extracurricular activities that the majority of students are a part of. These activities provide an opportunity for community building and the strengthening of community support for the schools.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

One of the major strengths of the school is the collaboration between the school and the community, including collaborative networks. The school shares a unique relationship with the military. This relationship has provided opportunities for students that support and extend student learning. The military runs a youth program that provides services to students after school and during summer months. This program provides students with meaningful activities that bring relevance to the school curriculum.

## **Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:**

a) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?

The Visiting Team observed strong evidence that school administration supports and implements professional development activities that address school improvement and the accomplishment of school goals.

b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

Although the administration is relatively new to the school, a great deal of work has been done to develop a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement. Many staff members commented on the high level of unity among the school staff, and the support given to ensure all staff members are successful in their work. The Visiting Team commends the staff members on their commitment to each other, especially as it relates to moving forward with implementation of the school improvement plan and improved student learning.

# CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS

Dugway High School is in compliance with all NAAS standards for accreditation. Over the years, the school has worked diligently to maintain the accreditation standards as outlined by the NAAS and the Utah State Office of Education. The school's curriculum is aligned with the Utah State Core Curriculum. All professional educators are properly licensed and endorsed for their particular assignments, in accordance with Utah state requirements. The school is financially viable and ethical in its business practices. Dugway High School has created a culture of continuous improvement that supports student achievement.

### CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?
  - The school-wide action plan is aligned with data gathered from the accreditation process the school employed. It specifically relates to the information from survey data. Although it addresses the critical areas for follow-up as related to survey data, it is the opinion of the Visiting Team that the school is possibly missing additional critical areas due to the fact that essential questions were not addressed by departments, and focus groups did not address NSSE quality indicators.
- b) To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?
  - The Visiting Team believes there is strong commitment by the school administration to the action plan and school-wide improvement. The Visiting Team also believes that the administration has the skills necessary to develop commitment from all major stakeholders in the implementation of the action plan. Furthermore, the Visiting Team is confident the school will follow through with the recommendations listed in this report.
- c) How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?
  - The school administration has demonstrated the ability to implement school-wide initiatives and programs. The staff has made positive comments related to the direction the principal is taking the school. The Visiting Team is confident in the

school's follow-up process for implementing and monitoring progress on the action plan.

# CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

### **Commendations:**

- The Visiting Team commends the staff and administration of Dugway High School. The staff is committed to the students and their individual learning. Staff members set high expectations for students, are committed to academic excellence, and make themselves available when students are struggling or have questions. Staff members are also very committed to the success of their colleagues. Many of the new staff members commented on the support they have received from the veteran teachers. The school administration has the school moving in a positive direction and has the support of the staff. The staff has appreciated the principal's efforts to recognize them for their efforts.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for its focus on student learning, and for addressing the needs of struggling students. The school has put in place many opportunities for students who are struggling academically. Teachers are available before school, after school (including at their homes), and during lunch periods to assist students who need additional support. The teachers and principal have analyzed student mastery of the curriculum down to the individual student level, and have addressed interventions to students who have not achieved mastery.
- The Visiting Team commends the community on its support for the school and student learning. Interviews with community members indicate the commitment of the community to the school, the staff, and most importantly the students.

## **Recommendations:**

- The Visiting Team recommends that each of the departments complete the "Essential Questions for Departmental Analysis," including areas of strengths and recommended areas of growth. The areas of growth should be considered as the school revises the school improvement plan.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school reconvene the focus groups and utilize the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) indicators of quality to provide information related to Dugway High School's organizational effectiveness. Findings from the focus groups should be considered as the school revises the school improvement plan.

• The Visiting Team recommends that the school develop indicators and assessments of the desired results for student learning (DRSLs) that are observable and measurable. The school should incorporate these into the school improvement plan.